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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/715,186	11/17/2003	Lawrence Conaway	RB-0108	3338

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EXAMINER

REIFSNYDER, DAVID A

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1723

DATE MAILED: 11/08/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/715,186

Applicant(s)

CONAWAY ET AL.

Examiner

David A. Reifsnyder

Art Unit

1723

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 September 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-22, 24, 25 and 27-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-22, 24, 25 and 27-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 17 November 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1-4, 6-16, 23-25 and 27-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over SU 1685534 A1 in view of Sadeghi et al.

Regarding claims 1-4, 6-16, 23-25 and 27-33; SU 1685534 A1 discloses a method of separating bitumen from tar sands; comprising the steps of mixing said bitumen and tar sands with water to form an aqueous slurry; tempering said slurry to a temperature of between about 70°C and 80°C; shearing said slurry by agitation for at least one minute; adding hydrogen peroxide and sodium carbonate (i.e. sodium bicarbonate) to make the aqueous slurry an alkaline aqueous slurry; forming oxygen bubbles between said bitumen and said sand by decomposing a portion of said hydrogen peroxide therein; and separating said bitumen from said sand. (see pages 4 and 5 of the PTO 2005-5020 translation of SU 1685524); however, SU 1685534 A1 fails to disclose that the shearing by agitation is done using a rotary mixer.

Regarding claims 1-4, 6-16, 23-25 and 27-33; Sadeghi et al. discloses a method of separating bitumen from tar sands; comprising the steps of crushing said tar sands (col. 5, lines 44-48); mixing said bitumen and tar sands with water to form an aqueous slurry; tempering said slurry to a temperature of about 45°C- 55°C; adding benzoyl peroxide, (see col. 20, lines 24-25; and col. 21, lines 18-20) sodium phosphate, sodium hydroxide, and sodium carbonate (i.e. sodium bicarbonate) to raise the slurry pH above 7.0 (see col. 14, lines 31-33); and shearing said slurry with a rotary mixer (see col. 5, line 60 to col. 6, line 11; col. 7, lines 20-38; col. 19, lines 7-16; col. 20, lines 19-50 and Example 1) for at least one minute.

It is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention for SU 1685534 A1 to have used the rotary mixer as taught by Sadeghi et al in order to have sheared by agitation SU 1685534 A1's aqueous slurry because SU 1685534 A1 and Sadeghi et al. teach similar methods.

Regarding claims 4, 6 and 7; SU 1685534 A1 in view of Sadeghi et al. suggests a method of separating bitumen from tar sands as discussed above but fails to disclose further treating the removed clean tar sands layer. It is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have further treated the tar sands layer if it still contained some bitumen. Furthermore, it is **well known in the separating art to duplicate (i.e. repeat) method steps.** Therefore, it is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have further treated the tar sands layer by repeating the method steps.

Regarding claims 8 and 9; SU 1685534 A1 in view of Sadeghi et al. suggests a method as discussed above but fails to disclose further treating the froth layer containing bitumen and oil. It is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further treat the froth layer containing bitumen and oil if it still contained sand. Furthermore, it is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have further treated the froth layer containing bitumen, sand and oil the same way as it was treated the first time.

Regarding claims 29-31; SU 1685534 A1 in view of Sadeghi et al. suggests a method of separating bitumen from tar sands as discussed above but fails to disclose the step of treating his tar sands before said mixing step by sieving the sand in a rotary trommel. It is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to sieve the sand to remove any large rocks and also make the tar sands finer so that it better reacts with the hydrogen peroxide.

Claims 17-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over SU 1685534 A1 in view of Sadeghi et al. further in view of Luft et al.

Regarding claims 17-22; SU 1685534 A1 in view of Sadeghi et al. suggest a method as discussed above but fails to teach increasing pressure to be a gauge pressure of 1 to 5 atmospheres. Luft et al. discloses a method of cleaning a medium contaminated with organic constituents which includes adding water to the soil to form an aqueous slurry, and adding hydrogen peroxide to the aqueous slurry while pressurizing said aqueous slurry at a pressure range of approximately 2 to 19 gauge pressure. (See claim 1 and convert bar to gauge pressure) It is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have pressurized the slurry of SU 1685534 A1 in view of Sadeghi et al. as taught by Luft et al. because it is well known when cleaning things, to do so at elevated pressures. Furthermore, Luft et al, SU 1685534 A1 and Sadeghi et al. all teach similar methods.

Claims 8, 9 and 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sadeghi et al.

Regarding claims 8 and 9; Sadeghi et al. discloses a method as discussed above but fails to disclose further treating the froth layer containing bitumen and oil. It is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to further treat the froth layer containing bitumen and oil if it still contained sand. Furthermore, it is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have further treated the froth layer containing bitumen, sand and oil the same way as it was treated the first time.

Regarding claims 29-31; Sadeghi et al. discloses a method of separating bitumen from tar sands as discussed above but fails to disclose the step of treating his tar sands before said mixing step by sieving the sand in a rotary trommel. It is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to sieve the sand to remove any large rocks and also make the tar sands finer so that it better reacts with the benzoyl peroxide. Furthermore, a rotary trommel is a conventional type of mixing device.

Response to Arguments

The Examiner agrees with the applicants' remarks filed September, 5 2006. The rejections that **the applicant agrees with and has not traversed are maintained**, while the rejections that the applicant **has traversed are withdrawn**.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David A. Reifsnyder whose telephone number is (571) 272-1145. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wanda M. Walker can be reached on (571) 272-1151. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


David A Reifsnyder
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1723

DAR